

Faramach Press Release

When did the band come together?

In September 2014 a new teacher had just moved to a new school, Woodmill High School in Fife. He looked around the school and saw a huge amount of natural talent however there was no traditional musical activities on offer to the pupils. Also at that time there was a push on what he calls "Scottishness" in the curriculum. These two factors came together and he decided to start a band. This band would not be like every other "school band". This would be a GOOD band... no, this would be a GREAT band.

Deciding that this was a journey rather than a quick process, he hand picked some younger players in the school who seemed to have the right attitude and he called them all together. At that meeting he said he wanted to start a band that would make them work harder than they've ever worked and that they would achieve greater things than they ever thought possible. That it would be the most demanding and difficult thing they had ever done, but they would amaze themselves with what would happen. He told them that they would be judged not as just a school band, but he would be comparing them to bands like Skerryvore, Skippinish, and the Peatbog Faeries. He said if they didn't like the sound of it they could leave immediately. They all stayed.

The band was named after we had a competition across the school to decide on the best name for a Celtic Rock Band. From hundreds of entries Faramach was the winner - it means "Making a Noise" in Gaelic which seemed highly appropriate!

How has it evolved since that time?

The band took a few months to shake itself out but we always had the motivation to work hard and act like a real band rather than just a school group. Also fairly early on it was decided to add a couple of techies to our band because we wanted to make sure our sound is well supported. By hard work it has grown in to something which is very good indeed! The catalyst for development across the rest of the school has always been a strong motivation, and this is evolving all the time.

What are the challenges?

As a band based in a school there are a number of factors we need to take in to account. Each year we have members of the band leave school. But this just requires a bit more planning, and actually enhances the impact it has across the school because people want to join Faramach. Even primary school pupils who aren't yet at Woodmill High are talking about wanting to join the band so it's a good way to raise the standards of music making. Also because it's a band of youngsters, getting gigs is sometimes difficult. It's hard to describe the group to potential promoters and venues without them dismissing the band as 'just kids'.

How would you describe your sound today?

Our sound is all about energy and drive. We take on well-known songs like Amy Macdonald's "This Is The Life", KT Tunstall's "Black Horse And The Cherry Tree", Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats" or even Dolly Parton's "Jolene" and we deliver the numbers right to the back of the venue. We also have a growing number of originals too. Our sets take audiences on a journey from a full band playing loud and fast, to solo numbers of guitar and voice which tug at the heart and reduce everyone in the room to tears. It's also about the vulnerabilities of both the players and the audiences - there's no denying that our players are young, but all too often audiences show their vulnerabilities too because they take one look at the players and seem to think "ah bless, they're only kids"... then they sit there open mouthed when Faramach start to play.

What are the rewards?

The rewards are difficult to describe. We have played to thousands of people over the last few years, and every gig is different. The players have developed in to truly excellent performers, and the techies have shown they've become highly professional in their approach to supporting the Faramach sound.

What have been some career highlights?

Although we have done a fair amount of travelling to different places, and played at a variety of different events including The Perthshire Amber Festival and Celtic Connections, the highlight so far has been our tour to Nova Scotia where we played a residency at The Old Triangle Alehouse in Halifax. What an amazing trip that was.

What makes a good song?

A good Faramach song is one that affects the emotions of an audience. It may drive them to get up and dance; it may make them hold the hands of their loved ones and whisper "I love you"; or it may, as happened in Nova Scotia, cause the bar staff to turn off all of the fridges behind the bar because the atmosphere was so charged with tender emotion. A good Faramach set makes audiences want to come back night after night to marvel at the range of musical material on offer.

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